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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TAIPEI 000030

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TAGS: PREL MARR PGOV TW CH  
SUBJECT: TAIWAN DEPUTY NSA OFFERS INITIAL READOUT ON HU  
JINTAO TAIWAN SPEECH

Classified By: The Director for Reasons 1.4(b/d)

Summary

¶1. (C) Deputy National Security Advisor Ho Sze-yin offered the Deputy Director his preliminary assessment of Hu Jintao's & six point8 speech on Taiwan. Although the speech repeats many earlier themes and phrases, President Ma is likely to focus on the signs of flexibility it offers. The speech seems to confirm that China is ready to allow Taiwan to become an WHA observer, but Taiwan cannot accept a single-year solution, Ho suggested. The DPP remains deeply skeptical, despite Hu's implicit recognition of the need to include the opposition in the cross-strait rapprochement process. End Summary.

¶2. (C) During a January 8 meeting with the DDIR, Taiwan Deputy NSA Ho Sze-yin offered what he underscored was his personal, initial response to PRC President Hu Jintao's & Six Point8 speech marking the 30th anniversary of the PRC's & Message to Taiwan Compatriots.8 Overall, Ho said, he was encouraged by the signs of new flexibility in Hu's remarks and by a number of wholly new ideas that suggest China is willing to continue to pursue progress in cross-strait relations. While President Ma and NSA Su Chi likely share this view, they will take their time in making a formal response, Ho said. (Note: Ho called DDIR the next day to confirm that Ma shares his views and will eventually issue a formal response.).

"Avoiding Unnecessary Friction" Bodes Well for WHA

¶3. (C) Ho cited the fifth of Hu's six points as an example of new Chinese thinking. Although it couched the issue as one of "avoiding internal friction" and not an international issue, by calling for "pragmatic consultations" on Taiwan's participation in international organizations, the speech clearly signaled China's readiness to reach an accommodation on WHA observership. Ho noted that this squared with signals Taipei had received from PRC academics and other sources. In an aside, Ho observed that, from a domestic political perspective, Taiwan needed more than a one-time offer to take part in the WHA meeting in May. If that is all China can offer, he said, Taiwan should not accept it. Ho demurred on the question of whether the NSC had a direct channel to discuss WHA and other & international space8 issues with China, but said he had made his views on the issue clear to visiting PRC academics.

DPP Reference Means Beijing Sees Need to Include Opposition?

¶4. (C) Hu's speech also was groundbreaking in that, for the first time, a formal Chinese document on Taiwan referred explicitly to the DPP, Ho said. While the language in Hu's fourth point focused on the need for the opposition to drop its pro-independence stance, the fact that the DPP is mentioned at all shows China understands that it cannot simply ignore such a large minority on Taiwan. For their part, DPP politicians, green-leaning academics and other critics have paid the most attention to the first of Hu's six points, which addresses the idea of &one China.<sup>8</sup> Even here, though, Ho argued, there is a difference in the nuance of the PRC language. Although the official English version Hu's speech refers to the One China principle,<sup>8</sup> the Chinese text ) somewhat ungrammatically ) speaks only of &abiding by One China<sup>8</sup> (keshou yige zhongguo). Ho's assessment was that the speech was an effort to carve out maximum flexibility for the pragmatic, but difficult, process that may lie ahead.

Comment

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¶5. (C) President Ma and his NSC advisors have clearly studied Hu's speech very carefully. Ho Sze-yin offered his reactions while reading from a text that laid out point-by-point and side-by-side Hu's "six points" and Jiang Zemin's "eight points" issued in 1995. He said some of Hu's points were clearly intended for a domestic (mainland) audience, but there is new flexibility in this latest iteration of China's Taiwan policy. He mused, ironically, that the 2005

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anti-secession law might have actually given Hu more room for flexibility. The Director has scheduled a meeting with NSC chief Su Chi next Monday (January 12) and will follow up further on this subject.

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